



Interface Meeting Minutes: October 3, 2013

Welcome / Introductions, Reintroductions

Emily Viola, PSEG

Al Sczweck, Retired J&J member

Ed Hoff, NJ Transit

Ellen Leinfuss, Underwriters

Adrienne Keaton, Middlesex County WIB

Myrna Pinckney, NJDVRS Office Mgr., Elizabeth

Matt Alcalde, Bio NJ Talent Network

Vicky Gaddy, VP BioNJ Talent Network

Ellen Kurtz, Bert Kormann Clinical Supervisors, JFK Vocational Rehabilitation

- **INTERFACE BROCHURE:** Board members were provided with a hard copy, and an emailed copy will be sent. The plan is to Review the brochure for relevance and correctness.
- **VOC REHAB GRADUATE INTERNS:** Ellen and Bert are each mentoring an intern from Rutgers / former UMDNJ program for Rehabilitation Counseling. The students are working in the program for 2 days per week for 8 weeks this semester. In January, they will be working full time, totaling 600 hours. Voc Rehab has hired 2 full time staff over the last 5

years from among the interns. The department is also mentoring a COTA, Certified Occupational Therapy Asst. student from the Rutgers / UMDNJ program that was just initiated last year.

Review of Programs

- **High School Career Development Program:**

There are 42 students in Edison and 4 in Brick. New worksites have been under development at the JFK LTC facility Edison Estates. An additional Rehab Asst. was hired as a replacement for the summer months and retained for this year due to the high number of students.

The Brick program is at the minimum number of students to remain viable. Efforts there are directed to rebuild or close next year if new students cannot be recruited.

Ellen shared the article that highlighted our graduate from last year who was awarded volunteer of the year award by Woodbridge, he works p/t in the Woodbridge Comm. Center as well as continuing to volunteer at JFK at the information desk.

Staff discussed the constant need to remain updated on DDD, the state service that is afforded to students that graduate high school. The parameters of their services are very broad, including day programs, employment programs, housing. Ed Hoff mentioned his involvement with the Independent Living Centers which are supplemental services, funded by the DVR. Myrna Pinckney added that a new level of services at DVR for the young students with disabilities that are being graduated from school.

- **Adult Career Development Program / Evaluation**

As mentioned above, the adults being referred by DVR are occasionally younger than the high school students served.

The level of service for adults in the program has remained at a flat level and will probably be the same as last year.

Al Sczweck mentioned that OFCCP should be invited to speak to Interface and clarify the new ruling on hiring levels for people with disabilities in companies that are federal contractors. He states that

information should be useful to Voc Rehab in approaching companies to hire our clients to meet the standards.

Several Board members and staff agreed that hiring appears to be still experiencing an up-tick in the private sector. Vicky Gaddy and Mat Alcalde report the same in Life Sciences sector. They are supportive of inviting the other Talent Networks for input to areas to focus on for employment.

Emily Viola returned to Interface after a few years out. She shared some stories about the Sandy Recovery, and gave input to an increasing number of technical jobs currently and in the near future resulting from utility infrastructure upgrades since the storm's effects. She also mentioned that we can explore how to tap into the billions of dollars coming from the feds for Resiliency Programs for future programs.

Ed Hoff commented that from the private sector, we need to be prepared to answer the question that employers have about how to hire persons with disabilities without it COSTING them.

Consensus was that the adult programs need to have a more visible Job Development model, reaching out to companies.

BioNJ staff offered that their newsletter can be available for content about JFK programs; success stories from here can be highlighted in stories to their member companies. Matt requested that he be put on mailing list to receive the JRI electronic newsletter to review (quarterly).

- Computer Application Training / DDD Application

CAT program was approved by DDD to serve adults on Fee-For-Service basis. One student is starting and another has expressed interest.

There have been 7 hires in the past 6 months from the program, already exceeding the previous year.

The curriculum will be upgraded to teach Office 2010. The memory in our computers was just upgraded for the first time since 2007 because some of the programs could not run and internet services were very slow.

- Lab Program

There were six hires in the last six months;

- **Training Program Graduation November 15, 2013**

There are 26 graduates being honored, 13 from each program.

Interface members are invited

- **Merck Disability Mentoring Day =- cancelled due to layoff announcement, will be rescheduled before year's end**
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Dept Open House October 23, 2013, 9-12**

Sterile Processing Training Program Update – not discussed

Greenhouse Program – not discussed

Recycling Program – not discussed

Next Interface meeting November 7, 2013

Submitted by Bert Kormann; P: Interface / Minutes October 2013

2013: FOLLOW UP OF TRANSITION STUDENTS GRADUATING IN 2012, *One Year Later*

Of the 17 Career Development Program students who graduated in June 2012, 15 or 88% were contacted. In the past year all of these students had a work experience of some kind. Nine students have an ongoing relationship with DVRS/DDD state agencies that provide employment services to persons with a disability. Three have worked at least 12 months.

Seven students are working in competitive employment. Wages range from \$7.25 -\$9.00 per hour. Five of these jobs are in food service. One is a clerical assistant and another machine operator. One student is a union member with benefits.

- Three are volunteers.
- One former client babysits for her sister. One is self-employed as a film editor.
- Two students began sheltered employment programs which did not work out.
- One student is no longer pursuing employment due to a family emergency.

Of these 15 students four participated in a training program or Community College.

- One student has earned 30 credits towards an Associate's Degree in Communication at Union County Community College.
- Another student plans on entering a community college program in September.
- One student attended the JFK Laboratory Assistant Training Program.
- One student earned his Blue Seal Boiler's License.
- One student attended Elijah's Promise, a vocational training program in New Brunswick in food service.
- One student attended a three month PCT program.

Transportation to and from work continues to be an issue.

- Several students rely on their family to get to work.
- One student uses public transportation.
- Two students use Access Link Services.
- One drives his own car to work and another former student drives the family car to work.
- One student uses his bicycle.
- One follow up call resulted in the family learning about the NJ Transportation Instruction Program to enable the graduate to learn of a means to work.